

# OrdnanceReports

News updates from around the world



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## Rumsfeld warns Syria on military shipments

by Matt Kelley

WASHINGTON (AP) - Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld issued a stern warning to Syria on Friday to stop sending military equipment to Iraqi forces, saying such shipments have included night-vision goggles.

"We consider such trafficking as hostile acts and will hold the Syrian government accountable for such shipments," Rumsfeld said.

Rumsfeld also said that Iraqi militants opposed to Saddam Hussein's regime were streaming into Iraq from Iran, where they had been in exile. He said their presence was complicating U.S. war plans.

Sharing a Pentagon briefing with Rumsfeld, Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Iraqi government has lost control of 35 percent to 40 percent of its territory and that allied air forces have supremacy over 95 percent of Iraq's airspace.

Rumsfeld said that Iraqi forces were being helped by shipments from Syria, Iraq's neighbor to the West. "We have information that shipments of military supplies have been crossing the border from Syria into Iraq, including night-vision goggles," he said.

"There's no question but that to the extent that military supplies or

equipment or people are moving across the borders between Iraq and Syria, it vastly complicates our situation," Rumsfeld said.

Asked if the United States was threatening military action against Syria, Rumsfeld said: "I'm saying exactly what I'm saying. It was carefully phrased."

"These deliveries pose a direct threat to the lives of coalition forces," the defense secretary added.

Syrian President Bashar Assad has described the military action as "clear occupation and a flagrant aggression against a United Nations member state." Syria is the only Arab country currently on the U.N. Security Council.

Syrian officials were not immediately available for comment.

Rumsfeld also said that "hundreds" of Iran-backed militants opposed to Saddam's regime, known as the Badr Brigades, were entering Iraq and complicating U.S. war plans drawn up by the on-scene commander, Gen. Tommy Franks.

"To the extent that they interfere with Gen. Frank's activities, they

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## WELCOME

*Iraqi citizens wave to U.S. Army soldiers in southern Iraq on March 24. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Igor Paustovski U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Igor Paustovski*

# Bush, Blair: coalition loosening Iraqi regime's 'grip of terror'

by Linda D. Kozaryn, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2003 — “Slowly, but surely, the grip of terror around the throats of the Iraqi people is being loosened,” President Bush said today.

Accompanied by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bush spoke at a press conference at Camp David, Md. He said coalition forces are “advancing day by day in steady progress against the enemy.”

“We are now engaging the dictator’s most hardened and most desperate units,” Bush said. “The campaign ahead will demand further courage and require further sacrifice, yet we know the outcome. Iraq will be disarmed, the Iraqi regime will be ended and the long-suffering Iraqi people will be free.”

There is no timetable for the war, the president stressed to reporters. The war will last “however long it takes to win” and the Iraqi people have got to know that “they will be liberated and Saddam Hussein will be removed — no matter how long it takes.”

Blair echoed the U.S. president’s commitment, noting that while some people are fiercely loyal to the regime, he has no doubt that the “vast majority of ordinary Iraqi people are desperate for a better and different future.”

The prime minister restated the coalition’s “total resolve.”

“Saddam Hussein and his hateful regime will be removed from power,” Blair said. “Iraq will be disarmed of weapons of mass destruction and the Iraqi people will be free. That is our commitment. That is our determination, and we will see it done.”

Blair noted that in just under a week, coalition forces have achieved “a massive amount.” They’ve secured Iraq’s southern oil fields and facilities, protecting that resource and wealth for the Iraqi people and avoiding ecological disaster, he said. They’ve disabled Iraq’s ability to launch external aggression from the west.

Coalition forces are within 50 miles of Baghdad, he continued. They’ve secured the key port of Umm Qasr, paving the way for humanitarian aid. They’ve also damaged Iraq’s command and control capabilities.

Right now, Blair said, coalition forces are primarily focused on military victory, “which they are prosecuting with the utmost vigor.” Coalition forces are moving into the north. The west is protected from external aggression. “We will carry on until the job is done.”

Blair said he’s confident the operation’s goals would be met, and he paid tribute to the integrity of the coalition forces. He said their professionalism, skill and bravery “stands in sharp contrast to the brutality of Saddam’s regime.”

“Day by day, we have seen the reality of Saddam’s regime,” Blair said. “His thugs prepare to kill their own people, the parading of prisoners of war, and now the release of those pictures of executed British soldiers.”



**COALITION PARTNERS** — U.S. President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair hold a news conference following their overnight summit at Camp David, March 27. White House photo by Paul Morse

“If anyone needed any further evidence of the depravity of Saddam’s regime, this atrocity provides it,” he said. “It is yet one more flagrant breach of all the proper conventions of war.”

“More than that,” Blair continued, “to the families of the soldiers involved, it is an act of cruelty beyond comprehension. It is, indeed, beyond the comprehension of anyone with an ounce of humanity in their souls.”

Bush said he is not surprised by reports of the regime’s brutality. He’s not surprised Iraqi forces are committing crimes against coalition soldiers and killing their own citizens and trying to blame it on coalition forces. He’s not surprised that deserters are being blown away by fellow Iraqi citizens.

“We had reports the other day of a dissident who had his tongue cut out and was tied to a stake in the town’s square,” the president said. “He bled to death. That’s how Saddam Hussein retains power.”

If Saddam Hussein uses weapons of mass destruction, Bush said, “it will just prove our case and we will deal with it.” Anyone who launches a weapon of mass destruction will be tried as a war criminal, he added.

“We’ve got one objective in mind — that’s victory,” he said, “and we will achieve victory.”

Bush said the United States and coalition partner nations will stand with the Iraqi people on the challenges ahead. The coalition is prepared to deliver humanitarian relief on a large scale, and relief operations have begun.

Bush and Blair urged the United Nations to resume the oil-for-food program. Bush said more than half the Iraqi people depend on this program as their sole source of food.

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# Myers speaks to Arab world via Al Jazeera

by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2003 – The United States has absolutely no desire to stay in Iraq any longer than necessary, the U.S. military's senior officer told the Arab world today.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard Myers reached out to the 60 million Arab viewers of the Al Jazeera satellite television network in an interview today.

Myers told Dana Budeiri, the Al Jazeera correspondent in the Pentagon, that the U.S.-led coalition will accomplish its mission of disarming Saddam Hussein.

A U.S. objective is to leave an Iraq that is better off "than it is under this brutal dictator," Myers said. "I think most of your viewers know the record of Saddam Hussein and the treatment of his own people and the treatment of his neighbors."

The United States will leave an Iraq that is intact, has a government that guarantees the rights of all citizens, and has no weapons of mass destruction, he said. "We want to do that as quickly as possible."

The U.S. military will pull out of Iraq as soon as the security situation is stable, Myers said. After Saddam falls, he added, there will be a military administration and that will shift to a civilian one. He hopes

## **Bush, Blair: coalition loosening Iraqi regime's 'grip of terror' continued**

"This urgent humanitarian issue must not be politicized," the president stressed, urging the Security Council to give Secretary-General Kofi Annan the authority to send food supplies to the Iraqis most in need.

The coalition is also committed to helping the Iraqi people over the long term, he said.

"Iraq's greatest long-term need is a representative government that protects the rights of all Iraqis," Bush said. "The form of this government will be chosen by the Iraqi people, not be imposed by outsiders."

American, British, Polish and other coalition troops are sharing the duties and sacrifices of the war to disarm Iraq, the president said, noting that the coalition assembled today is greater than that assembled in 1991.

"Ally after ally after ally has stood with us and continues to stand with us," Bush told reporters. "We appreciate the bravery, the professionalism of the British troops and all coalition troops. Together we have lost people and the American people offer their prayers to the loved ones of the British fallen just as we offer our prayers to the loved ones of our own troops who have fallen."

Blair offered his nation's condolences, sympathy and prayers to the families of the American service members who have fallen in this conflict.

that the model of Afghanistan – where a civilian interim government took charge fairly quickly – can be followed in Iraq.

Myers said providing humanitarian assistance to Iraq is another pressing issue. He noted coalition troops have already brought humanitarian supplies into the country with them. Maritime forces are working to clear a channel so shipborne supplies can begin flowing in. "(Coalition forces) came into the country not only to fight the Iraqi regime but to provide humanitarian assistance," he said.

Myers said that coalition forces have not yet found any Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. However, he added, forces have found new chemical and biological protection suits in a couple of places.

"People know full well that coalition forces do not have chemical

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## **Rumsfeld: Saddam's 'death squads' preventing more Iraqi surrenders**

by Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2003 — U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has a three-word answer to why more Iraqi troops aren't laying down their arms and surrendering to coalition forces: Saddam's death squads.

The death squads are "enforcers," part of Fedayeen Saddam, a paramilitary organization headed by Hussein's eldest son Uday, Rumsfeld told reporters today on Capitol Hill.

The Fedayeen "go into the cities and shoot people and threaten people and insist that they not surrender and not rise up," the secretary explained during a break in his testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee. "And, they're vicious," he added, estimating Fedayeen Saddam has 5,000 to 20,000 members.

The secretary related how the Fedayeen recently dealt with an unfortunate Iraqi who opposed the regime. "They left somebody in the center of Baghdad not too long ago with his tongue pulled out until he had bled to death — cut his tongue out," Rumsfeld said.

The Fedayeen aren't just in Baghdad, but are deployed across the country.

"And they're shooting — executing — people in Basra, Rumsfeld declared.

The secretary noted that such horrific behavior shouldn't surprise anyone who has followed Hussein's 20-plus year career as Iraq's dictator. Hussein, after all, has "used chemicals on his own people, as well as his neighbors," Rumsfeld pointed out.

More than 4,000 Iraqi troops are now in custody as prisoners of war, U.S. officials have reported.

# Marine Gen. Peter Pace decries Iraqi war crimes

by Linda D. Kozaryn, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2003 — Iraqi forces loyal to Saddam Hussein have executed coalition troops and committed other “disgusting” war crimes, U.S. Marine Gen. Peter Pace said March 26.

The deputy chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the military’s second highest ranking officer, Pace told CNN’s Larry King he was surprised that Saddam’s forces have committed so many war crimes since ground fighting began. He said the Iraqis have executed captives, put operational command posts inside hospitals, stored weapons in schools and dressed their soldiers in civilian clothes.

“They have used women and children as human shields,” he continued, “and they have pretended to surrender and then opened fire on the forces to which they were supposedly surrendering. These are all war crimes, and they’ve all happened in the first six days of this conflict.”

The executions Pace referred to occurred when a U.S. supply convoy took a wrong turn into hostile territory, a Pentagon official said. Intelligence reports indicate when the troops attempted to surrender, they were shot.

“I’ve never seen anything like this,” Pace continued. “Although we have known in the past that they are capable of doing this, but to do it so blatantly, so early, is not only a surprise, but to me it’s disgusting.”

All told, there have been about 20 to 30 combat deaths, Pace said. “The reason I can’t be more precise than that is that there are, as you would expect, (in the) fog of war, some who we think are missing (who) now may in fact be dead. We don’t have precise locations on all of the folks on the battlefield.”

Pace expressed empathy with the families of coalition prisoners of war.

“I hope they understand and know that all of us, especially those who are still forward, the teammates of theirs on the ground, are doing everything we can to locate and to free their sons and daughters,” he said. “We thank them for the sacrifice that they’re making, and we all hope and pray that this war can end quickly so that we can repatriate POWs, not only U.S. and coalition POWs, but any who we might capture from the other side.”

As coalition forces have pressed forward in Iraq, Pace said, Iraqi opposition has been sporadic. More than 4,000 Iraqis have surrendered and he expects more will do so.

“Part of the problem right now, I believe, is that there are elements in the Iraqi military who would like to surrender,” he said, “but literally directly behind them are thugs from the special security forces who kill them when they try to surrender, who have literally cut the tongue out of someone who spoke out against the regime, and let him die in the street, who hung a lady the other day because she had the temerity to wave at a passing convoy of coalition troops.”

Overall, the general said, Operation Iraqi Freedom has been going extremely well. Saddam’s regime no longer controls the north, west or south, and coalition forces have penetrated about 200 miles toward Baghdad.

“So, if you happen to be sitting in Baghdad in the center of Iraq, you ought to be getting nervous about now,” he said.

Asked the whereabouts of the Iraqi air force, Pace replied laconically, “It’s not in the air. Had they taken off, they would have been shot down by the coalition forces, which is probably why they did not take off.

“As best we know, all of the airfields from which they would be able to take off, from which they might have taken off in the past, are now cratered. So, to our knowledge, there is not a runway in Iraq from which they could actually take off.”

Coalition forces have put over 1,000 planes into the air every day and will continue to do so. Whether this has produced the touted “shock and awe” intended, Pace said, depends on your perspective.

“I guess you need to be standing near the point of impact to understand whether or not it’s awesome,” he said.

The air campaign will continue as long as necessary, Pace added. “We will continue to put large numbers of airplanes in the air, and what will shift is we will move from a regime command and control to supporting troops on the ground as necessary to ensure that they have the firepower and the cover they need to get the job done.”

Coalition forces have also worked to secure Iraq’s oil fields. “One of our main objectives was to be able to secure the southern oil fields in a way that would prevent destruction of those and be able to turn back to the Iraqi people the wealth that is in the ground there so they can use it for their own prosperity,” he said.

Significant progress has also been made on the humanitarian front, Pace noted. British coalition forces are working to clear mines and to hire local laborers to get the port of Umm Qasr back into operation. Ships laden with food and medicine lie off the coast.

The Kuwaitis have offered water, he said, and British and U.S. engineers are building a pipeline through the southern part of Iraq into Basra to be able to provide up to 2 million liters of water per day. As coalition forces have moved forward, they have distributed 300,000 humanitarian ration packs.

“They have another 1.5 million humanitarian rations with them in the forward fighting areas,” Pace said. “And in the rear, the ships are beginning to come in, and the humanitarian efforts are beginning to really get into swing.”

To date, the general said, coalition forces have not discovered any weapons of mass destruction, but that may change as the Iraqi people become free of the regime’s oppression.

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# Sergeants Major Course postponed, shortened

by Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter

FORT BLISS, Texas (Army News Service, March 27, 2003) - The resident Sergeants Major Course, Class 54, slated to start in August, has been postponed to January because of current deployments.

The course will also be condensed to six months from its usual nine-month curriculum, according to Lt. Col. John Kirby, assistant commandant at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy.

"This is a one-time change to accommodate all the soldiers who are participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom," Kirby said. "Our folks in the Directorate of Training and Doctrine are currently reworking the program of instruction to accommodate the more condensed course schedule."

Prior to August 1995, the Sergeants Major Course was six months, but was extended to nine months after the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course was added, said Sgt. Maj. John Wyche, the Deputy Chief of Staff G3 sergeant major.

The Battle Staff NCO Course is used to prepare staff sergeants through sergeants major to serve in staff positions at battalion and

higher level. The course will be removed for Class 54, Wyche said.

Class 54 starts Jan. 12, 2004 and runs through June 30. Students may report as early as Dec. 1, and no later than Jan. 5. However, they are authorized to move their families early to Fort Bliss. They can also request an exception to policy to retain housing at their current duty station. The losing installation commander will be the approving authority for those waivers.

"Affording students the opportunity to move their families early gives them a chance to move into government housing, stabilize exceptional family members and enroll children in school," Kirby explained. Children must be enrolled in El Paso schools by July 27, in order to attend the first day of school, Aug. 19.

Deployed soldiers scheduled to attend the 17-day resident phase of the Non-Resident Sergeants Major Course June 7 - 20, will be rescheduled to attend later this year. Those not deployed are still slated to attend the June course.

*(Editor's note: Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter is the public affairs NCO at the Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss.)*

## Marine Gen. Peter Pace decries Iraqi war crimes continued

"What Pete Pace thinks will probably happen," he said, "is once the people understand that Saddam really is finished, that he is gone, and that there is a secure environment in which they can come forward, they will start pointing out to us the places where he has hidden these weapons in the past."

How long the war will last remains unclear, Pace said. Anyone who tries to put a time line on the operation is only guessing.

"What we need to understand is that we are six days into major land combat," he said. "We have already taken, wrested control, of a major portion of Iraq from the Iraqi forces. Some days are going to be better than others. It may go fast, it may go slow, but it is going to

go, and we're going to apply whatever power we need to get this job done."

The goal, he said, is to get rid of Saddam Hussein, get rid of his regime, get rid of the weapons of mass destruction, and turn Iraq back over to the Iraqi people so that they can have their own form of representative government.

"Saddam is going to be gone. How that's going to happen, I couldn't predict," he concluded.



*A U.S. Marines vehicle guards the rear of a convoy of supplies trucks heading north on the road to Baghdad, near the city of Ad Diwaniyah, central Iraq, Friday, March 28, 2003. (AP Photo/Laurent Rebours)*



*Kurdish fighters travel to a frontline position abandoned by Iraqi forces near the town of Chamchamal March 28, 2003. Iraqi forces have retreated towards the nearby city of Kirkuk after forward positions were bombed by U.S. warplanes earlier in the week. Reuters photo.*

*Soldiers with the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade go on patrol after parachuting into the city of Hariri in northern Iraq, a friendly Kurdish territory, in advance of the opening of the northern front. (LA Times photo)*



## **Myers speaks to Arab world via Al Jazeera continued**

weapons (and) do not have biological weapons,” he said. “So the question that must be asked is why did this group of Fedayeen Saddam and Ba’ath Party folks have 3,000 chemical and biological protective suits?”

The Al Jazeera correspondent queried the chairman on the general steps involved in protecting Iraqi civilians and specifically about the Baghdad market that the Iraqi regime said was hit by coalition bombs. Myers said U.S. Central Command did not have targets near the area.

“We don’t know what caused that,” he said. “We will continue to investigate to make sure, and if it was coalition forces, we will admit that.”

But Iraqi forces also could have caused the tragedy. “Iraqi forces put their anti-aircraft forces in civilian neighborhoods – close to mosques, close to schools – it’s entirely possible that the damage was done by a surface-to-air missile that the Iraqis were trying to fire,” he said.

Myers stressed that coalition forces will stand by their principles and do everything possible to spare civilians. “We have done this with our targeting so far,” he said. “We don’t know how many civilian casualties or deaths, because we’re not on the ground. But we think they are very, very few.”

“Our bombing has been very precise. You hear that from Baghdad – the lights are on, the waterworks are running,” he said. “During the day, it’s pretty much life as usual in many neighborhoods.”

Myers said coalition forces are taking great care to only apply power to regime forces that are resisting. “I can guarantee you that we will apply sufficient power to ensure that the end is never in doubt,” he declared. “In fact I can assure you that we will win this war against the Iraqi regime – not the Iraqi people – and we will disarm Iraq.”

“We still have a lot of tough fighting to do. We have not engaged the Republican Guard divisions yet. That should come here in the near future,” he continued.

The coalition military plan is essentially on track, the general said. The number of coalition forces in Iraq continues to grow, and the United States continues to flow forces into the area. The 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, is beginning its deployment to the region.

Myers made a point that the coalition has more than 4,500 prisoners of war. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is due to visit with Iraqi POWs tomorrow. He said wounded POWs have been cared for aboard the USNS Mercy.

“We are taking extraordinary care,” Myers said. “They are under the care of the best medical staff and doctors this country has. We would only hope that the Iraqi regime would allow reciprocal visits and the international Red Cross to the prisoners of war that they hold so they can ascertain their conditions.”

The chairman would not estimate how long hostilities will last. “We have two armored divisions roughly within 50 to 60 miles of Baghdad right now, a Marine division that’s a little bit further out,” he said. “I can’t put precise timelines on it, but we’re satisfied all around.”

# U.S., South Korea prepare for chemical warfare

Story and photos by Franklin Fisher, Stars and Stripes

TAEGU, South Korea — Ask one platoon sergeant in a U.S. Army chemical unit in South Korea how his troops benefit by training with their South Korean counterparts and he starts by talking about blind dates.

“You ever been on a blind date?” asked Sgt. 1st Class Walter Koski of 2nd Platoon, 267th Chemical Company, 23rd Chemical Battalion, from Camp Carroll. “It’s kind of like bein’ on a blind date. When the balloon goes up, you don’t want to be comin’ out here and having a blind date with the ROK Army.

“This way, when the chemicals come across the DMZ, we know what the ROK Army is capable of, they know what we’re capable of. We know their tactics, techniques and procedures, they know our tactics, techniques and procedures. And if we have to come together to do a joint decon, we can do that. We’re not learning at the last minute.”

The battalion’s main wartime job is decontaminating highways, airfields, supply depots and other “fixed sites” the enemy might hit with chemical agents. The troops would work closely with South Korean Army chemical units, spraying down those areas with decontaminants, especially in a war’s early stages.

On Tuesday, about 30 members of the 267th Chemical Company were on a South Korean Army installation in north Taegu with soldiers from South Korea’s 50th Homeland Reserve Division to practice decontaminating vehicles and troops.

Under the afternoon’s mock-battle scenario, the enemy had fired “WMD,” or weapons of mass destruction, hitting an important roadway with chemical agents. The U.S. and South Korean chemical troops had to move chemical trucks through the area, spraying water to simulate decontaminants.

In the final phase, the troops moved to a separate “clean” area, where the South Korean and U.S. trucks and troops were decontaminated.

“If the enemy uses WMD, these are the folks that are going to clean it up,” said Lt. Col. Bill Barnett, the 23rd Chemical Battalion’s commanding officer.

“Our wartime mission is going to require us to work with Korean units,” said Capt. Douglas Delp, the 267th Chemical Company’s commanding officer.

One major benefit of these exercises is an exchange of insights.

Koski, for example, picked up a few things Tuesday. When his unit decontaminates vehicles, a soldier with a hose sprays from the bottom of the vehicle and works up, eventually having to scale a ladder to get at its upper parts. But the South Koreans set up a metal arch-like rack fitted with spray nozzles at various points, some high enough to cover the vehicles’ tops.

And when the Americans decontaminate troops, the process ends



*On a South Korean Army installation in Taegu, South Korea, Korean troops practice decontamination techniques during day of chemical warfare training with their counterparts from U.S. Army’s 23rd Chemical Battalion.*



*A vehicle of the U.S. Army’s 23rd Chemical Battalion goes through a chemical decontamination point on a South Korean Army installation in Taegu, South Korea. U.S. and South Korean chemical troops joined for afternoon of mock chemical warfare drill.*

with the soldier still wearing the battle dress uniform, or BDUs. But Koski saw that the South Koreans decontaminate soldiers all the way to their underwear, with a shower to follow.

“Ours doesn’t extend that far so that might be something we might want to look into,” Koski said.

Pvt. Tricortney Blandin is a chemical operations specialist in Koski’s platoon. For her, the benefit was getting a first-hand look at how her unit would have to work chemical operations with the South Koreans in wartime.

“It’s practice,” said Blandin. “Like if it really happens in the real world, or they need us, we’ll actually know how to do everything.”

# ‘Bunker busters’ fall on Baghdad tower

by David Crary

The biggest bombs dropped on Baghdad so far - two 4,700-pound “bunker busters” - struck a communications tower Friday in an intense U.S. bombardment. In the south, British officers said Iraqi fighters defending the besieged city of Basra fired on hundreds of civilians trying to flee.

The British, who have encircled Basra, said their troops were trying to rescue and aid civilians wounded by the mortar and machine-gun fire from paramilitaries loyal to Saddam Hussein. A young woman badly wounded by shrapnel was driven to safety in a British vehicle, according to reporters near the scene.

“Here perhaps are the first pieces of evidence of Iraqi people trying to break free... and clearly the militia don’t want that,” said Col. Chris Vernon, a British spokesman.

British officers said soldiers from the 1st Black Watch battalion, in Warrior armored fighting vehicles, were trying to wedge themselves between the militia fire and the targeted civilians.

At Umm Qasr, near Basra, the first ship arrived at the allied-controlled port with relief supplies for Iraqi civilians. The Sir Galahad, a British supply ship, carried 300 tons of water, sugar, beans, and flour.

Fighting raged across the south - including a battle at a cement plant in which a U.S. Marine was killed - and a showdown in central Iraq over Baghdad was clearly drawing closer. With a new front opened by paratroopers in the north, U.S. forces are poised to move on the capital from multiple directions.

## Pentagon dedicates 9-11 memorial corridor

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, March 27, 2003) —At the end of the Pentagon’s 4th corridor is a hallway display full of memories and shattered dreams.

The corridor and adjacent wedge was destroyed on Sept. 11, 2001 when American flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon that morning.

Now rebuilt, work was completed last week on an attack corridor memorial, now located on the second floor.

Close to the display are the offices of Martha Carden and other G-1 personnel who survived the attack. Carden has worked for in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, now G-1, since 1984.

“Someone asked me how I feel having the display right outside my door. I thought about it for a moment and told him that these were my friends who are always in my heart. I like having them there.”

The display background is 962 pounds of Pentagon limestone, 2 inches thick. With a superimposed acrylic façade with “United in memory ... United in Freedom

Memorial coins, and photos and names of all 29 members of those killed during the Pentagon attack from the office of Assistant

Wary of engaging the better-armed allies in open desert warfare, Saddam’s government has been goading them to send ground troops into the city.

“The enemy must come inside Baghdad, and that will be its grave,” said Defense Minister Sultan Hasidim Ahem. “We feel that this war must be prolonged so the enemy pays a high price.”

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, briefing congressional committees in Washington, suggested American troops might lay siege to Baghdad rather than invade, in hopes its citizens would rebel against the government. Rumsfeld drew comparisons with Basra, where British troops have delayed an assault in hopes Iraqi defenders give up or are toppled by anti-Saddam civilians.

The Army’s senior ground commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace of V Corps, told reporters of The New York Times and Washington Post on Thursday that unexpected tactics by Iraqi fighters and stretched supply lines were slowing down the campaign. “The enemy we’re fighting is different from the one we’d war-gamed against,” the papers quoted Wallace as saying during a visit to the 101st Airborne Division headquarters in central Iraq.

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, at the daily briefing at U.S. Central Command in Qatar, insisted U.S. war planners had not underestimated Iraqi fighting capabilities, but said unexpected developments were inevitable in any war. He accused the Iraqis of using “terrorist death squads” who changed in and out of civilian clothes.

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Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) and DCSPER.

A Pentagon-shaped dedication plaque reads:

“Near this spot on September 11, 2001, the offices of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel endured a horrific attack by terrorists using a hijacked plane ... changing our lives forever.

These 29 friends, coworkers and loved ones paid the ultimate price for their Army and Nation. We will forever mourn their loss and celebrate their lives.

Our memories of their devotion and sacrifice will remain with us always - as we, the survivors, soldier on for this great Army and Nation.”

“For our survivors and current members of the M&RA / G-1 family, it serves as a symbol of resolve, reminding us of the importance of our mission and its potential cost,” said Lt. Gen. John Le Moyné, the Army G-1. “The memorial is a symbol that the M&RA and G-1 families will never forget how they were affected that tragic day 18 months ago.”

## President Bush, Prime Minister Blair hold press availability - Camp David, Maryland

**THE PRESIDENT:** Thank you all. It's my honor to welcome my friend and Prime Minister of Great Britain, Tony Blair, back to Camp David. America has learned a lot about Tony Blair over the last weeks. We've learned that he's a man of his word. We've learned that he's a man of courage, that he's a man of vision. And we're proud to have him as a friend.

The United States and United Kingdom are acting together in a noble purpose. We're working together to make the world more peaceful; we're working together to make our respective nations and all the free nations of the world more secure; and we're working to free the Iraqi people.

British, American, Australian, Polish and other coalition troops are sharing the duties of this war, and we're sharing the sacrifices of this war. Together, coalition forces are advancing day by day, in steady progress, against the enemy. Slowly, but surely, the grip of terror around the throats of the Iraqi people is being loosened.

We appreciate the bravery, the professionalism of the British troops, and all coalition troops. Together we have lost people, and the American people offer their prayers to the loved ones of the British fallen, just as we offer our prayers to the loved ones of our own troops who have fallen.

We're now engaging the dictator's most hardened and most desperate units. The campaign ahead will demand further courage and require further sacrifice. Yet we know the outcome: Iraq will be disarmed; the Iraqi regime will be ended; and the long-suffering Iraqi people will be free.

In decades of oppression, the Iraqi regime has sought to instill the habits of fear in the daily lives of millions; yet, soon, the Iraqis will have the confidence of a free people. Our coalition will stand with the citizens of Iraq in the challenges ahead. We are prepared to deliver humanitarian aid on a large scale — and as a matter of fact, are beginning to do so as we speak.

Today the Prime Minister and I also urge the United Nations to immediately resume the oil-for-food program. More than half the Iraqi people depend on this program as their sole source of food. This urgent humanitarian issue must not be politicized, and the Security Council should give Secretary General Annan the authority to start getting food supplies to those most in need of assistance.

As we address the immediate suffering of the Iraqi people, we're also committed to helping them over the long-term. Iraq's greatest long-term need is a representative government that protects the rights of all Iraqis. The form of this government will be chosen by the Iraqi people, not imposed by outsiders. And the Prime Minister and I are confident that a free Iraq will be a successful nation.



History requires more of our coalition than a defeat of a terrible danger. I see an opportunity, as does Prime Minister Blair, to bring renewed hope and progress to the entire Middle East. Last June 24th, I outlined a vision of two states, Israel and Palestine living side-by-side in peace and security. Soon, we'll release the road map that is designed to help turn that vision into reality. And both America and Great Britain are strongly committed to implementing that road map.

For nearly a century, the United States and Great Britain have been allies in the defense of liberty. We've opposed all the great threats to peace and security in the world. We shared in the costly and heroic struggle against Nazism. We shared the resolve and moral purpose of the Cold War. In every challenge, we've applied the combined power of our nations to the cause of justice, and we're doing the same today. Our alliance is strong, our resolve is firm, and our mission will be achieved.

Mr. Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER BLAIR:** Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you for your welcome. Thank you for your strength and for your leadership at this time. And I believe the alliance between the United States and Great Britain has never been in better or stronger shape.

Can I also offer the American people, on behalf of the British people, our condolences, our sympathy, our prayers for the lives of those who have fallen in this conflict, just as we have offered the condolence, the sympathy, and the prayers to the families of our own British servicemen.

Just under a week into this conflict, let me restate our complete and total resolve. Saddam Hussein and his hateful regime will be removed from power. Iraq will be disarmed of weapons of mass destruction, and the Iraqi people will be free. That is our commitment, that is our

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## **President Bush, Prime Minister Blair hold press availability - Camp David, Maryland continued**

determination, and we will see it done.

We had this morning a presentation of the latest military situation, which shows already the progress that has been made. It's worth just recapping it, I think, for a moment. In less than a week, we have secured the southern oil fields and facilities, and so protected that resource and wealth for the Iraqi people and avoided ecological disaster. We've disabled Iraq's ability to launch external aggression from the west.

Our forces are now within 50 miles of Baghdad. They've surrounded Basra. They've secured the key port of Umm Qasr. They've paved the way for humanitarian aid to flow into the country. And they brought real damage on Iraq's command and control. So we can be confident that the goals that we have set ourselves will be met.

I would like to pay tribute to the professionalism and integrity of our forces and those of the United States of America, our other coalition allies, and to say how their professionalism, as well as their skill and their bravery, stands in sharp contrast to the brutality of Saddam's regime.

Day by day, we have seen the reality of Saddam's regime — his thugs prepared to kill their own people; the parading of prisoners of war; and now, the release of those pictures of executed British soldiers. If anyone needed any further evidence of the depravity of Saddam's regime, this atrocity provides it. It is yet one more flagrant breach of all the proper conventions of war. More than that, to the families of the soldiers involved, it is an act of cruelty beyond comprehension. Indeed, it is beyond the comprehension of anyone with an ounce of humanity in their souls.

On behalf of the British government, I would like to offer my condolences particularly to the family and the friends of those two brave young men who died in the service of their country, and to the ordinary Iraqi people, to whom we are determined to bring a better future.

The future of the Iraqi people is one reason why much of our discussion has focused on humanitarian issues. Again, here we have the ship, the Sir Galahad, loaded with tons of supplies destined for the people of Iraq. The other immediate humanitarian priority is to restart the U.N. oil-for-food program, which the President and I discussed, and which I will be discussing with Kofi Annan later this evening. And this is urgent.

We also discussed the post-conflict issues. Contrary to a lot of the comment on this, the position is exactly as the President and I set out in the Azores — namely, that we will work with the U.N., our

allies and partners and bilateral donors. We will seek new U.N. Security Council resolutions to affirm Iraq's territorial integrity, to ensure rapid delivery of humanitarian relief, and endorse an appropriate post-conflict administration for Iraq.

But let me emphasize once again that our primary focus now is, and must be, the military victory, which we will prosecute with the utmost vigor. And the immediate priority for the United Nations is, as the President was indicating a moment or two ago, the oil-for-food program.

In addition, as has just been said to you, we had an excellent discussion of the Middle East, and we both share a complete determination to move this forward. It is, indeed, often overlooked that President Bush is the first U.S. President publicly to commit himself to a two-state solution, an Israel confident of its security and a viable Palestinian state. And I welcome the decision announced recently to publish the

road map as soon as the confirmation of the new Palestinian Prime Minister is properly administered.

Finally, I would just like to say this: I think it is important that we recognize at this time that the goals that we are fighting for are just goals. Whatever the difficulty of war, let us just remember this is a regime that has brutalized its people for well over two decades. Of course, there will be people fiercely loyal to that regime who will fight all the way; they have no option. But I have no doubt at all that the vast majority of ordinary Iraqi people are desperate for a better and different future, for Iraq to be free, for its government to be representative of its people, for the human rights of the people to be cared for.

And that is why, though, of course, our aim is to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and make our world more secure. The justice of our cause lies in the liberation of the Iraqi people. And to them we say, we will liberate you. The day of your freedom draws near.

**THE PRESIDENT:** We'll take two questions a side. We would hope that you would respect asking one question per question.

Fournier.

**Q That, of course, means I can ask each leader one question.**

**THE PRESIDENT:** No, it does not mean that. Of course, you will anyway, but —



## **President Bush, Prime Minister Blair hold press availability - Camp David, Maryland continued**

**Q** Yes, sir.

**First to you, Mr. Prime Minister.** Briefly, Secretary Powell said yesterday that the U.N. should have a role in postwar Iraq, but that the United States should have a significant, dominating control of post-Saddam Iraq. How will that kind of talk play in Europe?

**And, Mr. President, can you help me understand the timing of this war?** You talked yesterday that it will be — we're far from over. Today you said, it's going slowly, but surely we're working our way to our end goal. Given that the resistance has been as strong as it's been in the south, and that we have what you call the most hardened, most desperate forces still around Baghdad, are we to assume that this is going to last — could last months and not weeks — and not days?

**THE PRESIDENT:** I'll answer that question very quickly and then get to his. However long it takes to win. That's —

**Q — take months?**

**THE PRESIDENT:** However long it takes to achieve our objective. And that's important for you to know, the American people to know, our allies to know, and the Iraqi people to know.

**Q It could be months?**

**THE PRESIDENT:** However long it takes. That's the answer to your question and that's what you've got to know. It isn't a matter of timetable, it's a matter of victory. And the Iraqi people have got to know that, see. They've got to know that they will be liberated and Saddam Hussein will be removed, no matter how long it takes.

Go ahead.

**PRIME MINISTER BLAIR:** In relation to the United Nations, there's no doubt at all that the United Nations has got to be closely involved in this process. That's not just right; it's in everyone's interest that it happens. All I'm saying to people is, the focus — the immediate focus has got to be on the oil-for-food program, because that is thing we need to get sorted out with the United Nations literally in the next few days.

Now, after that is the issue of the post-conflict administration, where, as we said in our Azores statement, it's important there, again, that the U.N. is involved, and that any post-conflict administration in Iraq is endorsed by it.

But there are huge numbers of details to be discussed with our allies as to exactly how that is going to work — and also, the conflict is not yet over, we are still in the conflict. So we will carry on discussing that with the U.N., with other allies. But I think that is best done in those discussions without trying to do it by discussion through the press conference or through megaphone diplomacy.

But, about the role of the U.N. and the basis of the principles we set out in the Azores Summit, there is simply no difference at all there. But there are a huge amount of details as to exactly how that is to be

implemented that have to be a matter of discussion, and also, a matter of a reflection of the reality that we will face when we get to the point of post-conflict.

**Q — of the BBC. For both leaders, if I may.** We, all of us, noted quite a shift in emphasis over the last few days from a hope that this could be over very, very quickly, to the military in both countries briefing about months. My question is really, why do you think that shift has taken place? Did we underestimate the scale of Iraqi resistance? Has it been the weather? Has it been poor advice at the beginning of the campaign, or is it a military question?

**PRIME MINISTER BLAIR:** Well, you know, in the previous two campaigns in which I've been involved — Kosovo and Afghanistan — you reach this particular point where people start asking — ask us to speculate on exactly how much time it takes to get the job done. The important thing is the job will be done. There is no point in entering into a speculation of how long it takes except to say we have been, I think, just under a week into this conflict. Now, because of the way it's reported, you've got this constant 24-hours-a-day media, it may seem to people that it's a lot longer than just under a week. But actually, it's just under a week. And in just under a week, there is a massive amount that has already been achieved. I mean, after all, coalition forces are within 50 miles of Baghdad, the southern oil fields are secured, the west is protected from external aggression, we've got forces going into the north.

Now, we will carry on until the job is done. But there is absolutely no point, in my view, of trying to set a time limit or speculate on it, because it's not set by time, it's set by the nature of the job. All I would do, though, is point out to you that within those six or seven days, actually an enormous amount has already been achieved.

I think it's also important just to make one other point, which is we have very deliberately wanted to do this in a way that protects the future of the Iraqi people, too. And that's one reason why we went immediately in to secure the oil installations in the south. If we weren't able to do that, then the prospects of the Iraqi people for the future would be blighted. That's why the air campaign has targeted very, very specifically, as precisely as we possibly can, military command and control, the aspects of Saddam's regime, not the civilian population.

So we're doing this in the way that we set it out to achieve our objectives. We will achieve our objectives.

**THE PRESIDENT:** I have nothing more to add to that.

Randy.

**Q Mr. President, you've raised the possibility of holding Iraqis accountable for war crimes. I'm wondering if now if you could describe what war crimes you think they've committed to date. And secondly, sir, should the Iraqis be prepared for U.S. retaliation with nuclear weapons if they were to attack coalition forces with weapons**

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## **President Bush, Prime Minister Blair hold press availability - Camp David, Maryland continued**

### **of mass destruction?**

**THE PRESIDENT:** You heard the Prime Minister eloquently talk about the loss of British life. They were murdered, unarmed soldiers executed. I mean, that's a war crime. But, you know, I'm not surprised. This man, Saddam Hussein, has tortured and brutalized his people for a long, long time.

We had reports the other day of a dissident who had his tongue cut out and was tied to the stake in the town square, and he bled to death. That's how Saddam Hussein retains power.

His sons are brutal, brutal people. They're barbaric in nature. So I'm not surprised he's committing crimes against our soldiers. I'm not surprised to hear stories about his thugs killing their own citizens and trying to blame it on coalition forces. I'm not surprised to know that regular army forces are trying to desert, but get blown away by fellow Iraqi citizens. I'm not surprised, because the nature of the man who has run the country for a long period of time.

If he uses weapons of mass destruction, that will just prove our case. And we will deal with it. We've got one objective in mind: That's victory. And we'll achieve victory.

### **Q — (inaudible) —**

**THE PRESIDENT:** Well, they've been sent a message in this war, too, in that if you launch a weapon of mass destruction, you'll be tried as a war criminal. And I urge those Iraqi generals who have any doubt of our word to be careful, because we'll keep our word. We're going to keep our word to the Iraqi people and we'll keep our word to those war criminals in Iraq.

**Q I'd like to break the rule, because I don't think we know the details of why you're using this word "executed" about the British servicemen. I would like if you could explain that.**

**But could I ask you both — you both talked about the history, the justness of the cause that you believe that this war is. Why is it then, that if you go back to that history, if you go back over the last century or, indeed, recent conflicts in your political careers, you have not got the support of people who have been firm allies, like the French, like the Germans, like the Turkish? Why haven't you got their support?**

**THE PRESIDENT:** We've got a huge coalition. As a matter of fact, the coalition that we've assembled today is larger than one assembled in 1991 in terms of the number of nations participating. I'm very pleased with the size of our coalition.

I was down yesterday at CENTCOM and met with many of the generals from the countries represented in our coalition, and they're proud to be side-by-side with our allies. This is a vast coalition that believes in our cause, and I'm proud of their participation.

### **Q They're not Western allies. Why not?**

**THE PRESIDENT:** We have plenty of Western allies. We've got —

I mean, we can give you the list. Ally after ally after ally has stood with us and continues to stand with us. And we are extremely proud of their participation.

**PRIME MINISTER BLAIR:** Can I — in relation to our soldiers, the reason I used the language I did was because of the circumstances that we know.

And the reason why I think it is important to recognize the strength of our alliance — yes, there are countries that disagree with what we are doing. I mean, there's no point in hiding it; there's been a division. And you obviously have to take and go and ask those other countries why they're not with us, and they will give you the reasons why they disagree. But I think what is important is to bear in mind two things. First of all, there are an immense number of countries that do agree with us. I mean, I hear people constantly say to me, Europe is against what you're doing. That is not true. There is a part of Europe that is against what we are doing. There are many existing members of the European Union, and virtually all the new members of the European Union, that strongly support what we are doing. So there is a division, but we have many allies.

And the second point I'd make is this, that I understand why people hesitate before committing to conflict and to war. War is a brutal and a bloody business. But we are faced with the situation where Saddam Hussein has been given 12 years to disarm voluntarily of weapons of mass destruction, that the whole of the international community accepts is a threat, and he has not done so. Instead, what we have had is 12 years in which he has remained in power with these weapons intact and brutalized his own people.

Now, we felt we had come to the point where if we wanted to take a stand against what I believe to be the dominant security threat of our time — which is the combination of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of unstable, repressive states and terrorist groups — if we wanted to take a stand, then we had to act. And we went through the diplomatic process. We tried to make the diplomatic process work, but we weren't able to do so.

And the other reason why I think it is important that we act, and why, indeed, we have many, many allies, is because people do know that this is a brutal regime. That is not the reason for us initiating this action — that is in relation to weapons of mass destruction. But it is a reason why, if we do so, as we are doing, we do so in the full knowledge that we are, indeed, going to bring a better future for the Iraqi people.

And if you just want one statistic — although statistics I'm afraid never have the same emotional appeal as pictures, but we don't see these pictures of what has happened in Iraq in the past — but just one statistic: Over the past five years, 400,000 Iraqi children under the age of five died of malnutrition and disease, preventively, but died because of the nature of the regime under which they are living. Now, that is why we're acting.

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## **'Bunker busters' fall on Baghdad tower continued**

Brooks also said U.S. and British troops were expanding TV and radio broadcasts in Iraq, including Baghdad, aimed at reassuring civilians and encouraging soldiers to capitulate.

In one of the areas where resistance has been unexpectedly tough, U.S. Marines and Iraqi forces exchanged tank and artillery fire Friday in the strategic southern city of An Nasiriyah. Several buildings, including the power plant, were ablaze.

An Nasiriyah, on the Euphrates River near a junction of roads that lead from Kuwait to Baghdad, has been the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war.

Near the south-central city of Ad Diwaniyah, one Marine was killed and another injured in fighting with Iraqi irregulars at a cement plant in what one Marine officer, Lt. Col. B.P. McCoy, described as "blue-collar warfare." Two other Marines were killed when a vehicle ran them over while they slept.

In Baghdad, smoke drifted across the city - from fires started by authorities to conceal targets as well as from sites struck overnight in one of the heaviest allied air assaults of the war.

U.S. officials said bombs and Tomahawk missiles struck several communications and command-and-control facilities in the city, including the tower hit by two "bunker-busters" dropped from a B-2 bomber. One of Baghdad's main telephone exchanges - a seven-story building - was hit and gutted, but phones were working Friday in many parts of the city.

## **President Bush, Prime Minister Blair hold press availability - Camp David, Maryland continued**

And, yes, there are divisions in the international community. There are many people on our side, there are those that oppose us. But that is for us, I'm afraid —

**Q — why do they —**

**PRIME MINISTER BLAIR:** Well, I'm afraid, Adam, that is a question to ask to other people, as well as to us. All I can tell you is why we are acting and why we believe our cause to be just. And, yes, at the end of this whole process, we need to go back over it and ask why this has happened. But I simply say to you that if the world walks away from the security threat facing us, and if we back down and take no action against Saddam, think of the signal that would have sent right across the world to every brutal dictator, to every terrorist group.

Now, we believe that we had to act. Others have disagreed. As I say, at some point, we will have to come back and we'll have to discuss how the disagreement arose. But I have no doubt that we're doing the right thing. I have no doubt that our cause is just, and I have no doubt that, were we to walk away from this conflict at this time, we would be doing a huge disservice to future generations.

**THE PRESIDENT:** Thank you all.



*An Iraqi child runs holding the humanitarian aid he just received from British Royal Marines on the streets of Umm Qasr, southern Iraq, Tuesday, March 25, 2003. United Nations Security Council members were expected to formally adopt Friday, March 28, 2003, the draft resolution restarting the oil-for-food program in Iraq, that uses Baghdad's oil revenues for food and medical supplies. (AP Photo/Jon Mills, pool)*

Iraqi Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al Sahhaf told reporters that 75 civilians had been killed and 290 wounded in U.S. and British bombardments overnight, including seven deaths in Baghdad. He also said Iraqi forces destroyed or damaged several allied vehicles and killed four soldiers in an attack on a convoy near Najaf, less than 100 miles south of Baghdad.

Sahhaf rejected allied contentions that Iraq planned to use chemical weapons - speculation that arose after advancing forces found chemical weapons protective suits and gas masks left behind by retreating soldiers. Sahhaf said having such equipment is standard for any army.

Iraqi state TV broadcast a sermon by cleric Abdel-Ghafour Al-Quisi; a Kalashnikov rifle was seen resting against the pulpit. "May God install terror in the hearts of our enemies," he said.

Nine days into the war, Pentagon officials said close to 90,000 U.S. troops were in Iraq, with 100,000 to 120,000 more on the way. Some will be deployed in northern Iraq, joining 1,000 airborne troops who parachuted in Wednesday night to secure an airfield.

A paramount U.S. objective in the north is to seize the valuable oil fields near the city of Kirkuk, about 80 miles from the airdrop site.

Russian President Vladimir Putin described the war Friday as a threat to global stability and the most serious crisis since the end of the Cold War. He called for an end to the fighting, and resumption of U.N. efforts to forge a political settlement.

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# U.S.: Iraqi fighters not underestimated

by Nicole Winfield

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar (AP) - The U.S. Central Command denied Friday that it had underestimated Iraq's fighting ability but acknowledged that battlefield commanders may be seeing a "more precise" reality of resistance than headquarters.

There has been strong resistance by Iraqi paramilitary forces as U.S. troops have moved north from Kuwait toward Baghdad. American forces sought at first to bypass towns in the south in the drive to reach the Iraqi capital quickly but have had to slow their advance to root out enemy fighters.

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks said Iraqi paramilitary fighters, known as Saddam's Fedayeen, have changed in and out of uniform, used civilians - including children - as human shields and were forcing Iraqi regular troops to fight on threats of death.

"Our enemy always has a vote in how the circumstances go. I don't think that we have necessarily underestimated (the enemy). No one can ever predict how battle will unfold," he said.

The Army's senior ground commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace of V Corps, told The New York Times and The Washington Post on Thursday that unexpected tactics by Iraqi fighters and stretched supply lines were slowing down the campaign.

"The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against because of these paramilitary forces. We knew they were here, but we did not know how they would fight," Wallace said.

Brooks acknowledged that those "closer to the line" may have a different view of the situation than Central Command but stressed that "at the operational level, with what we seek to achieve, it remains unchanged."

"It's a different view down on planet Earth, if you will. As you get closer to the line, the more precise the realities are, and we take all this into account from all our commanders throughout the theater before making decisions to proceed," he said.

He gave an update on where U.S. forces were and what they had accomplished overnight: Special Operations aircraft destroyed two paramilitary headquarters in An Nasiriyah, site of ongoing clashes for several days, he said.

He acknowledged troops were farther to the east than Central Command has previously announced, saying the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force had advanced beyond Qal'at Sukkar, about 170 miles southeast of the capital.

He also acknowledged troops weren't necessarily pressing the advance farther but had "consolidated territory gained over the last several days and conducted active security operations to eliminate identified terrorist death squads."

Finally, he said V Corps, which defeated paramilitary attacks north

of Najaf, "continues to shape the battlefield for future operations."

Brooks said 12 Ababil-100 missiles had been fired from Iraq to Kuwait since the war started and that all had been intercepted by U.S. Patriot missile batteries. He said coalition aircraft had destroyed a number of launchers and showed a video of one being hit near the central Iraqi town of Karbala.

The Ababil-100 missile is a truck-mounted multiple rocket launch system with a four-round capability. Each rocket fired by the Ababil reportedly carries a warhead capable of dispensing 300 anti-tank bomblets and 25 anti-tank minelets. It is designed to have a range of 81 miles to 87 miles, well below the limit set by the United Nations after the 1991 Gulf War.

Brooks said preliminary orders had been issued to Iraqi forces for the possible use of chemical weapons, but indicated the assessment was based on prewar intelligence and the recent finds of chemical suits, gas masks and other materials against chemical attack.

"We have seen indications through a variety of sources and reporting means that first orders have been given that a certain point chemical weapons may be used," Brooks said.

He said earlier reports suggested there might be "trigger lines" - points near Baghdad, which if crossed by coalition troops, could prompt chemical attack.

Brooks said forces have discovered evidence suggesting Iraqi troops have moved chemical weapons south from Baghdad.

"I have not seen anything that says an order has been given to fire," Brooks said.

Central Command has previously reported that gas masks, chemical suits and nerve gas antidotes have been found in captured Iraqi position, including a hospital near An Nasiriyah.



*Corporal Nick Chapple, of RAF 51 Squadron, hands out his own rations to Iraqi children in a village near Basra, Thursday March 27, 2003. (AP Photo/James Vellacott, Pool)*

## Coalition launches new Afghan air and ground offensive

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP) - U.S.-led forces have begun a new air and ground offensive in northeastern Afghanistan against rebels of the ousted Taliban regime and their al-Qaida allies, the military said Friday.

A statement from Bagram Air Base said Operation Desert Lion was launched Thursday with an air assault in the Kohe Safi mountains. It did not specify the targets or say if any were hit.

Ground troops of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, acting on a tip from local informants, uncovered two arms caches, including rockets and ammunition for mortars, recoilless rifles and machine

guns, the military said.

Operation Desert Lion was being conducted simultaneously with another offensive in the southern mountains, Operation Valiant Strike, now in its second week. Several people have been arrested and large quantities of weapons recovered in that operation.

Military spokesmen have said operations in Afghanistan were not linked to events in Iraq. But the timing of the multi-phased action could be seen as demonstrating that the war in the gulf was not distracting or hindering the thousands of coalition forces in Afghanistan.

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**LONG GRAY LINE** — U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster IIIs line up in formation and wait to transport U.S. Army and Air Force personnel forward from an air base in Europe in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Stephen Faulisi



## Know when to seek help

Facing a war and the continuing threat of terrorism, Americans are experiencing many powerful emotions, mental health experts report. Everyone reacts differently and each person has his or her own tolerance level for worrisome conditions.

Here are some suggestions from the National Mental Health Association about what are common responses in such times and when to consider counseling.

Some feelings, though possibly unpleasant, are considered common when people experience particularly trying times:

- Disbelief and shock.
- Fear and anxiety about the future.
- Disorientation — difficulty making decisions or concentrating.
- Inability to focus.
- Apathy and emotional numbing.
- Irritability and anger.
- Sadness and depression.
- Feeling powerless.
- Extreme changes in eating patterns — loss of appetite or overeating.

Some signs can indicate you could benefit from the new coping strategies counseling might provide. These include:

- Nightmares and reoccurring thoughts about war or a traumatic event.
- Being unable to stop thinking about the war or a traumatic

event.

- Avoiding thoughts, feelings or conversations that remind you of a traumatic event.
- Avoiding places or people that remind you of a traumatic event.
- Having a sense of a foreshortened future.
- Continued difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep.
- Feeling jumpy or easily startled.
- Being overly concerned about safety.
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless.
- Having thoughts of death or suicide.

Some helpful techniques for dealing with challenging times include:

- Talk about it.
- Take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest and exercise, avoid excessive drinking and eat properly. Avoid foods that are high in calories and fat.
- Limit exposure to images of the war.
- Do something positive. Give blood, prepare “care packages” for people in the military, write letters to servicemembers.
- Ask for help. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Talk with a trusted relative, friend or spiritual advisor. If you want professional help, call your base medical facility or family and community services organization.

More information is available on the National Mental Health Association Web site: [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

# Bomb threat shuts down Army depot in Germany

by Rick Scavetta, Stars and Stripes

GERMERSHEIM, Germany — A bomb threat halted work Thursday at the Gernersheim Army Depot, where military and civilian logistics personnel pack and ship food, water, and supplies for deployed troops.

About 10:30 a.m., a German man phoned a U.S. operator in Heidelberg saying a bomb had been planted at the depot, said Lt. Col. Richard Karlsson, the 411th Base Support Battalion provost marshal.

Military police and bomb-sniffing dogs arrived to clear and check buildings. All employees were evacuated from the base.

The base, about 15 miles southwest of Heidelberg, has warehouses for the Defense Logistics Agency, the Defense Commissary Agency and the U.S. State Department.

For several hours, German soldiers from the 2nd Battery, 52nd Rocket

Artillery Battalion from Hermeskeil lined the base perimeter while military and civilian workers waited outside the gate.

Many workers were frustrated that they could not get back to work, saying they felt their work supplying the troops is vital during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

About 100 workers for Defense Distribution Depot Europe were on duty packing field rations when they were told to evacuate, said Karin Flagler, the depot's acting division chief.

"We fell behind with the work," Flagler said. "We hope to get caught up tomorrow."

By 1:30 p.m., most of the workers were sent home. Only supervisors returned on base, once local military police cleared their buildings. Shortly after, military police gave the all clear, Karlsson said.

## Iraqi TV shows Saddam meeting germ warfare expert

WASHINGTON (CNN) — Iraqi TV broadcast footage Thursday of Saddam Hussein meeting with a number of officials, including one of Iraq's top experts on germ warfare.

Dr. Huda Ammash, a senior Baath party official, played a key role in rebuilding Iraq's surreptitious biological weapons program in the mid-1990s, U.S. intelligence officials said.

The televised meeting could have been designed to send a message that Saddam's regime might be planning to use weapons of mass destruction, "or it could just be an old tape they decided to play for some other reason," one official said.

Believed to be in her mid-40s, Ammash earned a doctorate in microbiology from the University of Missouri in 1983, officials said.

Ammash is the daughter of one of the leaders of the coup that brought the Iraqi Baath party to power in 1968. Her father died under mysterious circumstances; there were reports that Saddam ordered his death.

U.S. officials said they were unsure whether the tape played Thursday was of a meeting conducted since the war started or an older meeting.

*A U.S. Marine with 3rd Batt., 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, guards a highway south of Baghdad, Iraq on Thursday, March 27, 2003. (AP Photo/Laura Rauch)*



## Rumsfeld warns Syria on military shipments continued

would have to be considered combatants. And therefore we're suggesting they not interfere," Rumsfeld said.

"They are Iraqis....They have been housed in Iran, armed by Iran, sponsored by Iran," Rumsfeld said. "Gen. Franks and the coalition countries are busy, they've got a complicated task. We'd prefer it not be made more difficult by the neighbors."

Rumsfeld and Myers briefed as America's battle plan for Baghdad was taking shape, with U.S. forces now in position to strike the Iraqi capital from nearly all sides - or to mount a siege and wait for Saddam Hussein's regime to fall to internal opposition.

Myers said that Republican Guard units defending the city are "dug in."

"They could be consolidating to make a defense. It doesn't make any difference. The outcome is certain," said the Joint Chiefs chairman.

The Bush administration's accusations against Syria follow complaints that Russia had sold anti-tank guided missiles, jamming devices and night-vision goggles to Iraq.

The administration has faulted the Russian government for lack of oversight of Russian firms and for not interdicting the shipments. Russian President Vladimir Putin has denied the allegations.

It was not immediately clear if U.S. officials were suggesting that the night-vision goggles arriving via Syria were Russian-made.

When asked if the shipments from Syria were "state sponsored," Rumsfeld said he wouldn't answer because "it's an intelligence issue."



*Hackers replaced the English-language Web site for Arab satellite television network Al-Jazeera with a U.S. flag and the message "Let Freedom Ring" as seen in this image taken from a computer Thursday, March 27, 2003. Calling themselves the "Freedom Cyber Force Militia," the hackers briefly hijacked Internet traffic destined for Al-Jazeera's Web site and to a different Web page on computers operated by Networkworld Connections Inc., an Internet provider in Salt Lake City. (AP Photo)*

"They control their border," he added. "We're hoping that kind of thing doesn't happen."

As sporadic battles raged between American infantry and defiant Iraqi troops and paramilitary guerrillas, more armor and at least 100,000 reinforcing U.S. and allied troops are on their way to join the coalition force over the next few weeks.

In the interim, the American game plan is simple: bombs, bombs and more bombs.

The Army's senior ground commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace of V Corps, told reporters of The New York Times and The Washington Post on Thursday that unexpected tactics by Iraqi fighters and stretched supply lines were slowing down the campaign. "The enemy we're fighting is different from the one we'd war-gamed against," the papers quoted Wallace as saying during a visit to the 101st Airborne Division headquarters in central Iraq.

Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, at the daily briefing at U.S. Central Command in Qatar, insisted U.S. war planners had not underestimated Iraqi fighting capabilities, but said unexpected developments were inevitable in any war. He accused the Iraqis of using "terrorist death squads" who changed in and out of civilian clothes.

Meanwhile, a U.S. official involved in military planning and intelligence said Iraqi troops have been spotted between U.S. and Iraqi lines wearing full chemical protection suits and unloading 50-gallon drums from trucks. U.S. intelligence doesn't know what was in the drums, but fear it could be chemicals.

Officials have said that the closer invading forces get to Baghdad, the higher the possibility that a cornered regime will launch an attack with chemical weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, which Saddam has denied he has.

U.S. and British aircraft are pounding some of the estimated 30,000 Republican Guard forces arrayed around Baghdad and striking inside the capital against Saddam's levers of power and modes of communication.

The military early Friday rolled out new weapons - two 4,700-pound, satellite-guided "bunker busting" bombs were dropped from American B-2 bombers on a major communications tower on the east bank of the Tigris River in downtown Baghdad. The bombs were twice the size of the bunker busting bombs that were being used before.

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*A public communication center that was hit during an airstrike in Baghdad, Thursday March 27, is seen from a bus during a press tour in this picture taken Friday, March 28, 2003. Intense U.S. bombing on the Iraqi capital continued Friday, aimed at disrupting communications between Saddam Hussein's leadership and his military. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)*



*U.S. soldiers and volunteers walk off a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during an evacuation drill at Camp Humphries, at Pyongtaek, south of Seoul, South Korea Thursday March 27, 2003. American forces conducted a bi-annual exercise known as Non-combatant Evacuation Operation Thursday, practicing for the possibility of having to evacuate the 65,000 to 75,000 U.S. citizens in South Korea if war were to break out. (AP Photo/Christopher Torchia)*

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*A two-year-old Iraqi girl, held by her brother, is treated by Squadron Leader Simon Chapple, a travelling doctor, in a small village near Basra Friday, March 28, 2003. The girl was treated for an infection caused by contaminated water. (AP Photo/James Vellacott, Pool)*



*Paratroopers with the 173rd Airborne secure the Hareer Air Base on Thursday after landing in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq. Getty Images photo.*